

## Candidate Qualification / Position Statement For *Coalition for a Better Memphis* Website

The CBM will post your completed statement on our website, [www.bettermemphis.org](http://www.bettermemphis.org), exactly as it is submitted. It is important that your information be complete – please use extra space if needed and feel free to attach a resume or any supplemental information. Is questionnaire is also located on the website [www.bettermemphis.org](http://www.bettermemphis.org) under the tab “Candidate Ratings Guide.” Please email the statement to [peggy@bettermemphis.org](mailto:peggy@bettermemphis.org) or Fax 901-752-0743 by March 4, 2014.

Name: Taylor Berger \_\_\_\_\_

Website: [www.taylorberger.com](http://www.taylorberger.com) \_\_\_\_\_

Candidate for: County Commission, District 5 \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you believe you are qualified for this position?

I am an attorney turned small business owner and entrepreneur, which makes me a relentless problem solver. Crafting solutions to complex issues is what I’m good at and what I love to do. My success in this stems from my curiosity and imagination. I tend to look at things differently, pulling together diverse perspectives and understanding relationships between issues that at first appear disparate. I’m a consensus builder. I listen to people, and can relate to most everyone I meet. Humility allows me to work with others’ motivations and goals to craft compromise.

These character traits and skills will serve me well on the County Commission. I do not bring a stiff ideological agenda with me. I am running as a Democrat but with substantial Republican support because of my pragmatic approach to issues. As an attorney I learned that listening to each side of an argument with an open mind yields the best result. Some may think I am naïve to think I can help change the tenor of the Commission by practicing kindness and keeping a positive attitude. I believe that at least here on the local level we should be able to agree on certain things. We have to put ego aside and focus on building the city. We have to listen to the boots on the ground: the businesses, neighborhoods and nonprofits that toil everyday with real issues. By listening we can understand the problems. That is the first step to finding real solutions, and what I can bring to the Commission.

Name three specific things you would like to accomplish if elected:

With the unified school district and the national spotlight on Shelby County we have the opportunity to change how we educate, from pre-kindergarten through high school and into college or vocational-technical training. As a County Commissioner I would lead in this realm. I would work

with our elected school board, community leaders, teachers and students, ensuring that education is funded, effective and efficient.

Public health includes oversight of Regional One Health and its expansion, addressing infant mortality, policies to reduce blight, make streets pedestrian and bicycle-friendly and improving public access to green space. While significant headway has been made in each of these areas, they will continue to present challenges and opportunities over the next four years. Our local response to the Affordable Care Act could put Regional One Health in a much stronger financial position as the number of insured patients increases. If we leverage that to improve outreach in areas including preventative and prenatal care we can significantly improve public health. If the state attorney general approves the recent "tax dead" parcel initiative we have a unique opportunity to improve neighborhoods. Finally, we must keep up the momentum we have with Greenprint and similar initiatives to keep moving the county forward as a healthy, desirable place to live.

Economic development is broad area that includes business incentives such as the PILOT program, workforce development and vocational-technical training, taxes and education. As a business owner I know firsthand the challenges faced by entrepreneurs and operators in Shelby County. I've struggled through the layers of county and municipal bureaucracy. I've written blogs to explain to others the myriad permits, licenses and tax obligations new business owners have to navigate. I've passed up public and Chamber resources because I felt they were probably more trouble than they were worth. I've struggled to find qualified employees and to train them properly. These are the kind of things we must address if we are going to attract and retain talented people and growing companies in Shelby County. As someone who has been through it multiple times and continues to build new businesses and create new relationships, I am uniquely prepared to help.

Have you ever been delinquent on your property taxes? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_ x\_\_\_\_\_

Have you declared bankruptcy? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_x\_

Have you ever been convicted of a felony? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_ x\_\_\_\_\_

If you answered "yes" on any of the above items, please list the year and provide details. -

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List other elected positions you have run for and the outcome of the election:

none\_\_\_\_\_

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**Current Employment**

Company: Self Employed \_\_\_\_\_

Length of Employment: 4 years \_\_\_\_\_

Brief Job Description: I stopped practicing law about four years ago and became an entrepreneur. I started YoLo, Chiwawa, Tamp & Tap and assisted with several other businesses. Currently I am a marketing and real estate consultant for Henry Turley Company. I am a restaurant consultant, working on four different restaurant concepts.

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**Education**

Please list all college/advanced degrees attained.

<u>College/University</u>	<u>Degree</u>	<u>Graduation Year</u>
Rhodes College	B.A. (anthropology/sociology)	2002 _____
University of Memphis School of Law	J.D.	2007
University of Washington School of Law	LL.M. (taxation)	2008 _____

Additional information relating to your educational background (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Law Review associate editor; Joseph Henry Award for best article published in the Tennessee Bar Journal by a practicing attorney; \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How long have you lived in Memphis? All my life except a year in Idaho and a year in Seattle \_\_\_\_\_

Where did you grow up? Memphis \_\_\_\_\_

If you grew up in Memphis, what schools did you attend: PDS elementary; White Station Middle School; Christian Brothers High School \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Marital status/children: Married with two young children \_\_\_\_\_

Please identify up to five organizations that are actively supporting your candidacy and provide a contact (with phone number) for each.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Please list your association memberships and identify any leadership positions you have held in the past.

1. Make Memphis!, Founder and president \_\_\_\_\_
2. Memphis Food Truck Association, Founder and past president \_\_\_\_\_
3. Greater Memphis Chamber \_\_\_\_\_
4. Memphis Area Legal Services Low Income Taxpayer Clinic, Founder, past Director
5. Memphis Business Journal Small Business Award finalist \_\_\_\_\_
6. Memphis Magazine Who's Who 2010-2013 \_\_\_\_\_
7. Memphis Bar Association, \_\_\_\_\_
8. Tennessee Bar Association \_\_\_\_\_
9. Mississippi Bar Association \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

Please list up to 10 current or past civic/community memberships.

1. Playback Memphis, board member and Marketing chair \_\_\_\_\_
2. Knowledge Quest, board member \_\_\_\_\_
3. Idlewild Church deacon and personnel committee \_\_\_\_\_
4. Memphis Restaurant Association board member \_\_\_\_\_
5. StartCo mentor \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

Other Contact Information:

Campaign Chair: Elizabeth Rincon \_\_\_\_\_

Treasurer: John Planchon \_\_\_\_\_

Any other information you would like to share with the voters:

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Taylor Berger

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Memphis TN 38117  
(901) 552.6252  
tcbmem@gmail.com

Graduated from Christian Brothers High School, Rhodes College, University of Memphis Law School and the University of Washington Tax Law Masters Program. Practiced tax and estate planning law for two years before going into business.

Founded **Memphis Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic** in 2008. Now entering its sixth year, the federal-grant funded clinic provides legal representation to low-income taxpayers involved in disputes with the IRS and before the US Tax Court.

Founded **YoLo** in 2010 as Memphis' first self-serve frozen yogurt shops. Expanded into gelato and bakery production, adding locations and licensing the brand across three states, and partnering with Malco theaters and University of Memphis.

Founded non-profit business alliance **Memphis Food Truck Association**. With more than 30 active members, has become the primary source for local food truck communication, events, advice, press, social media and governmental activism.

Acquired manufacturing company **Memphis Contract Furniture** in November 2012. Helped position MCF to expand into furnishing health care, gaming and retirement facilities, leveraging 30-year history of making custom furniture for the hospitality industry.

Founded **Chiwawa** restaurant serving Mexican and American street food in former Chicago Pizza Factory space on Madison Avenue in March 2013. Chiwawa has won multiple awards for branding, design and food.

Founded **Tamp & Tap** premium coffee bar, quick-serve restaurant and pub. Created a new kind of space for downtown workers and residents to gather, adding a texture and vitality to the downtown Memphis community.

Developed **Bedrock Foods** as Memphis' only source for prepared paleo meals and snacks. The food is purchased online and picked up at various local venues.

Contracted with **Henry Turley Company** as marketing director for The Lofts at South Bluffs and assisted with recruiting tenants for various redevelopment projects.

Developing new paradigm of restaurant called **Truck Stop** at Cooper and Central in Midtown. Constructed entirely of shipping containers, Truck Stop features a constantly shifting menu from the city's best food trucks, a full bar and small plates from the Truck Stop kitchen.

Developing restaurant, market and butcher concept called **Bounty on Broad** with chef Jackson Kramer of Interim Restaurant, featuring a farm to table menu but also will be Memphis' first 100% gluten-free restaurant.

Developing **Maui Brick Oven**, first corporate store of a franchise outside of Hawaii, featuring a 100% gluten free menu.

Producer of previtalization campaign for the **Tennessee Brewery**, activating the century-old building for a period of six weeks with a series of pop-up retail, restaurants and other events.

Founder of **Make Memphis!** non-profit initiative with a mission to connect people and shepherd ideas through to action, delivering results that make Memphis a better place to live and work. Integrating with Mayors Innovation Delivery Team IOBY Memphis project.

Volunteer activities include serving on boards of the **Memphis Restaurant Association**, **Playback Memphis**, **Knowledge Quest** and a mentor for **StartCo** and deacon at **Idlewild** Presbyterian Church.

Awards include Tennessee Bar Association Joseph Henry award for best [article](#) by a practicing attorney published in 2010 Tennessee Bar Journal; Memphis Magazine Who's Who 2011, 2012, 2013; Memphis Business Journal small business award finalist 2011; Memphis Business Journal 2011 top 40 under 40; multiple Memphis Flyer Best of Memphis awards in 2011, 2012, 2013.